

National Sheriffs' Association Urges Lawmakers to Back FIGHT Act to Eradicate Animal Fighting and Related Crimes

National Sheriffs' Association, National District Attorneys Association, American Gaming Association, United Egg Producers among 600 endorsers of FIGHT Act

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) this week endorsed federal legislation designed to strengthen enforcement of our nation's anti-dogfighting and anti-cockfighting laws and to crack down on

related offenses. The association, on behalf of more than 3,000 elected sheriffs nationwide, "acknowledges animal fighting is a crime of violence" with "links to crimes against people including, but not limited to, child abuse, murder, assault, theft, intimidation of neighbors and witnesses, and human trafficking." [Here is the complete National Sheriff's Association endorsement.](#)



Cockfighting Match

The NSA endorses the Fight Inhumane Gambling and High-Risk Animal Trafficking (FIGHT) Act H.R. 2742, S. 1529), joining the National District Attorneys Association, the American Gaming Association, and United Egg Producers, and [more than 590 agencies and organizations](#) in backing the measure. The legislation was advanced by Animal Wellness Action and introduced in the House of Representatives by Reps. Don Bacon, R-Neb., and Andrea Salinas, D-Ore., and in the Senate by Sens. Cory Booker, D-N.J., and John Kennedy, R-La.

"Animal fighting is vicious animal cruelty at its core, but we in law enforcement know it's tangled up with illegal firearms, drugs, gambling, and outbursts of violence," said Sheriff Greg Champagne, president of the National Sheriffs' Association and the St. Charles Parish Sheriff in Louisiana. "It is a priority for the National Sheriffs' Association to get the FIGHT Act over the finish line in Congress this year. Dogfighting and cockfighting undermine public safety in our communities, and there's no time to waste in strengthening our laws." Sheriff Champagne



It’s a call to action for Congress when our top two law enforcement agencies say we must fortify our laws against dogfighting and cockfighting to end these crimes of extreme violence in our nation”

Wayne Pacelle, President of Animal Wellness Action

expressed thanks to Louisiana Sen. John Kennedy for co-leading the legislation.

“It’s a call to action for Congress when our top two law enforcement agencies — the National Sheriffs’ Association and the National District Attorneys’ Association — say it must be a priority to fortify our laws against dogfighting and cockfighting to end these crimes of extreme violence in our nation,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy. “Animal fighting is rotten to its core and is a threat to so many aspects of a civil and safe society.” The NSA and NDAA represent more than 5,000 elected law enforcement

leaders covering every part of the United States.

Animal fighting maims and kills dogs and birds for the thrill of the bloodletting and for high-stakes gambling, with cockfighters affixing razor-sharp knives or gaffs on roosters’ legs for combat. Animal fighting is closely tied to organized criminal enterprises including illegal weapons dealing, drug trafficking, and community violence. There have been multiple mass shootings involving Americans at animal fighting venues from Hawaii to Mississippi to Mexico. Congress extended the reach of the federal law against animal fighting to the U.S. territories in 2019, but to date, there has not been a single prosecution of illegal cockfighting in the territories.

The NSA resolution states that we must “end this hideous so-called sport, and urges the nation’s state, local, and federal governments to condemn dogfighting and cockfighting in the strongest terms possible by passing and maintaining penalties for the crimes.”

The FIGHT Act, by amending Section 26 of the Animal Welfare Act, would enhance enforcement of these laws by banning online gambling on animal fights; halting the shipment of mature roosters (chickens only) through the U.S. Postal Service (it is already illegal to ship dogs through the mail); allowing a civil right of action for private citizens against animal fighters after proper notice to federal authorities; and enhancing criminal forfeiture penalties to include real property for those convicted of animal fighting crimes.

The FIGHT Act would save millions of animals trafficked every year in the United States, including hundreds of thousands smuggled across the U.S. border with Mexico. The long-distance movement of birds, who are often infected with avian diseases, is a threat to production agriculture for broiler birds and laying hens.

Virulent Newcastle Disease has entered the United States through illegal smuggling of infected cockfighting roosters from Mexico at least ten times, sparking epidemics that cost hundreds of millions of dollars and necessitated the killing of at least 16 million to contain further disease

spread. Animal Wellness Action and the Center for Humane Economy released a [comprehensive 63-page report](#) on the links between cockfighting and avian influenza and virulent Newcastle Disease.

As of June 13, 2024, the ongoing H5N1 bird flu epidemic has killed 96.91 million poultry in 496 commercial and 655 backyard flocks and countless wildfowl in all states except Hawaii. This is by far the most expensive animal disease outbreak in U.S. history, increasing egg and poultry prices and costing billions to date to try and extirpate the virus. The United Egg Producers support the legislation, noting that 60 million laying hens have been lost to H5N1 during the last three years, shrinking supply and increasing prices.

No other animal welfare legislation has as much bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress, advocates say. For the health and safety of our communities, avian agriculture, and dogs and birds, Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy are calling on all U.S. lawmakers to cosponsor the FIGHT Act, and for House and Senate leaders to make its passage a priority.

ABOUT

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) whose mission is to help animals by promoting laws and regulations at federal, state and local levels that forbid cruelty to all animals. The group also works to enforce existing anti-cruelty and wildlife protection laws. Animal Wellness Action believes helping animals helps us all. X: @AWAction_News

The Center for a Humane Economy is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) whose mission is to help animals by helping forge a more humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both. The Center believes helping animals helps us all. X: @TheHumaneCenter

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